AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST An Infectious Aire.

OR A

Short Reply of Wel-wishers unto the Good and Peace of this Kingdome;

Vnto the Declaration of the 11th of February, 1647.

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WE have read your Declaration, and have thought good to give you this short account of those impressions that it hath left with us. Wee find it of that nature, that it would faine prompt others to thinke more than it selfe dares speake or utter, and yet speakes much more than it proves. But though we should take all insinuations for assertions, and all assertions for probations, we cannot see how all together would be sufficient to bring home the conclusions: neither that which is expresly set downe as the professed drift of the whole Booke: nor yet those that it is farther to usher in: The great sinew of that Body: The maine wheele or spring of your Engine, which if any thing must doe your feat of dis-uniting the hearts of the Kingdome from his Majesty, and justifying your professed rejection of him, is that which concerneth the death of the late King. A matter in deed of a very high nature; and though you are loth to expresse your selves therein, yet it is not hard to discerne what thoughts you would thereby commend unto us. But if you can clearly make good what you intend, why did you not speake it plainly? If you cannot, why doe you goe about by malicious art to insinuate that which you are not able to make good? Men that are under the power of others, use indeed sometimes to speake timorous verities: But where men armed with greatnesse and strength, speake fearefully, there the Truth is in danger.

But doe you believe, or can you thinke to perswade us, that the honour of so great a King, or his just power and Rights, are to be laid under foot upon surmises? upon quodlibeticall and uncertaine conjectures, whose grounds and foundations are rather in the conceits and apprehensions of men variable according to the variety of their affections, than in the reality of things or actions? When events are liable to divers causes, and those that have their residence within the breasts of men, to fixe them upon one without any sound reason for the choice, but because it appeares most serviceable to our purposes, is a fallacy of too open a collusion; That we should trust our Judgements with it in so great a matter; and therefore since you have proved nothing against his Majesty, in that particular, we cannot but inferre, that all that you want of evidence against him lyeth against your selves, and doth convince you to have committed so high an offence against the duty of Subjects, as against the candour of Christians.

As for us, The pious life of his Majesty; His exemplary carriage in the whole demeanour of his life The quiet and undisturbed tempet of his mind, notwithstanding the surly stormes wherewith he hath been attempted: His mercy toward others, even toward his enemies, unlikely to consist with such horrid cruelty towards his owne --- His constancy and undauntednesse of spirit in his sufferings, together with his great and commemorable patience; assisted with the great improbability of the act, as having in it too little an hire of advantage to procure the undertaking of so high an impietie, as that which brought a farre greater addition of burden than honour upon his back: The consideration of the deare affection between him and his Royall Father, never interrupted by any distaste likely to hatch such a viper in so noble a breast. These and many more together, with the highest engagement of Christian charity to our King, as they doe bind us, and even inforce us to abhominate and abhorre the thought of that thought, which you seeme to desire to infuse into us, and to keep our breasts armed and grounded, however you have or may disarme us otherwise against any insinuations that may lead us thereunto.

So when we consider the rules and practices of some Politicians, and the nature of man, which is observed to be such, as it is apt to hate those whom they have wronged, and to wrong them more; when we consider what hath been done already, what is dayly done, and what it is some mens interest, as the world judgeth of Interests to do; we cannot but encline to adhere rather unto this choice, to believe it much more likely that such a thing may be forged by some against him, than that he could commit such a thing against his Father without any such inducements either of revenge or interest: and where the guilt of this is now let the world judge, and which is the greater offence of the two.

But secondly, in case it could be proved, and so fully, so demonstratively proved, as is requisite to overcome that large portion of Charity which is due unto a King above all other sorts of men, and to him for ought we know above all other Kings, much the more for the sad condition wherein you keepe him, so clearly as to be victorious over so many and so dissuasive improbabilities that present themselves in array against it: we should indeed even then admit it with great reluctancy, as a truth that it might be thought a kind of impiety to understand; wee should then (when we must needs) looke upon it as a sad and great affliction unto our Nation, and as a great cause of humiliation (not of triumph or insulting) unto us; That God should suffer our King to fall into such a depth of impiety, for the sins of the Magistrate as of the Minister

ster, are usually the judgements of the people for their sins: But yet nevertheless, we should hold it our duty even in that case to cry out with the holy Prophet, *Micha* 7. 9. *We will bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him*, &c. And to set out selves to the duties of Fasting, and Prayers, and Teares, for the lamentation and expiation of so horrid an iniquity from his Majestie and the Kingdome. But we could not be perswaded that it were a Christian course for us to make His iniquity the countenance or excuse of ours: or admit it as a supersedeas or discharge of the bond of our allegeance, though it should render it indeed much discomfortable unto us; for as a Child owes his filiall honour and obedience not to a good Father, but to a Father, be he good or bad: so Subjects their allegiance not to a good King but to the King: and though wee deny not but Potentates may forfeit their Crownes by their impieties, yet the holy Word of God leades us to beleeve that none is thereby enabled to take that forfeiture but God; *Saul* forfeited his Crowne by his Sacrilegious intrusion into the Office and Function of the Priesthood, 1 *Sam.* 13. 8. &c. and doubled that forfeiture by his disobedience unto the Command of God concerning *Agag* and the spoile, 1 *Sam.* 15. 9. &c. And God both times proceeds to sentence against him: but yet none must take the forfeiture, nor put the Sentence in execution, till God himselfe was pleased to do it: And therefore notwithstanding all that, *David* durst not lift up his hand against him, 1 *Sam.* 24. & 26. *David* himselfe afterwards, though an holy man, yet was so far left unto himselfe for a time by God, that he fell into two horrid and unworthy sinnes: base in the eyes of men as well as hainous in the sight of God: First, committing adultery with *Bathsheba*, at such a time when her husband whom he so vilely wronged therein, was imployed in the hazarding of his life to doe his service; and then to cover that, treacherously contriving and procuring his murther: and yet this was no good plea to justifie *Absalom* or the sonne of *Bichri* in their rebellions: no nor yet *Shimei* in his foule-mouthed railing against him for it: But all of them were in their times overtaken with their rewards: and *David* yet ended his dayes in peace, being reconciled to God by his repentance. *Nero* was as it were a Devill incarnate, so bad, that his wickednesse added glory to the persecutions of those that suffered by him: And *Tertullian* useth it as an argument to prove Christianitie to be good, because *Nero* oppoled it: He made it his sport to see his owne Imperiall City set on fire before his face: and then when he had done, caused it most falsly and most wickedly to be laid upon the Christians.

And

And embrued his hands in the bloud of his owne Mother: and yet it is obſerved this very *Nero* was then Emperour and Governour of the Romanes at that very time when Saint *Paul* wrote unto them to be ſubject unto *the higher powers*: and tels them withall, that *whoever reſiſts ſhall receive to himſelfe damnation*. Let not any thinke that in this we plead for the wickednesſe of Kings: we are ſo farre from it, that as we doe beleeve the ſame ſinnes to be more hainous in them then in other men, and that their very iniquities contract greatneſſe from their greatneſſe: ſo we know and wiſh they may alwayes remember that their puniſhments, if they take not heed, will keep the proportion too, and prove that ſentence Canonicall, though it be written in the Apocrypha, *that great men ſhall be greatly tormented*; ſo that they ſhall get nothing by their impunitie from men. Neither is it for their ſakes, but for others that they are ſo priviledged: For the preſervation of Government, which is the good of the people.

Nor would we wiſh any to imagine that we thinke theſe patternes of wickednes have any ſuch paralells in his ſacred Majeſties ſtory, if it may be truly ſet down as ſome would perſwade, but only to ſhew the unforcibleneſſe of ſuch kind of deductions as our dayes have produced: and if it may be, to prevent the like hereafter. And to ſhew you here, that the Kings Right unto his Crowne and Government is entire againſt all that you have ſaid, though it could be made appeare (which God forbid we ſhould imagine) and if ſo, than there is no ground for us either to withdraw our Allegiance from him: nor is there any juſtification to be found for your ſtrange, undutifull, and we thinke unpatterned reſolutions: Wherein you that are ſubjects, and in the higheſt conſideration of your unlapſed Being; but the great Councell of the King have reſolved, not only to make no more addreſſes to him, but to receive no Meſſages from him; ſo that if he ſhould happily learne ſo much humility more by his ſufferings, as to petition you for food or raiment, or to obtaine a Phyſitian for his body, in caſe of ſickneſſe, or a Divine for his ſoule in another caſe, or in any other way wherein the good of the Kingdome may be concerned never ſo much; yet like the Adder you have ſtopt your eares againſt him, and forbidden all others under the danger of the penalties of Traitors (a ſtrange puniſhment for ſuch a ſinne) not to receive any Meſſages from him, nor to make any unto him.

As if to inpriſon your King, to baniſh Him into an Iſland, to Sequeſter Him from the comforts of His Wife, His Children, His Friends, His Servants; to deprive Him of the very means of His Salvation, by denying Him the aſſiſtance of His Chaplaines: as if all this and much more were nothing, unleſſe you did withall interdict Him

Him all Society of Mankinde; the monstrous injustice and cruelty whereof we may well wish had rather been found amongst Turkes and Heathens than us: and grieve that it should pollute any Christian and English Story; But that we may save you the labour of studying, or troubling your selves overmuch about the disposing of the Government of this Kingdome; we desire you to remember, that whensoever, and by what meanes soever the Lord shall please to put a period unto the Raigne of His Majestie, we are sufficiently instructed who it is that is immediately to succeed Him in the Government; since we haue not yet forgotten by his long and forced absence, that we have a Noble Prince in the world, descended from the bloud not only of the Ancient Kings of these Nations, in so continued and unquestionable a descent, as is enough to stop the mouth of malice it selfe; but also from the Loynes of many glorious Forraine Kings, whose Interest God defend we should have any thought of violating, or consenting with any that shall attempt it: and whilst it is so, there is no imaginable humane act or accident that can put the Government of this Nation into your hands, or leave it to your disposing. So that your conclusions that you draw so hard for, that you have even broken your Geeres, stick still in the mire, and you are run away without them, gingling your Bells as if all were at your heeles: we are still to seeke for a sound reason why the King should be secluded from His Government, or from the addresses of a Parliament unto Him, whose very Essence depends upon a correspondence and communion with him, since it is their very Parliamentary being to be His Counceilers; which cannot stand with a professed interception of addresses unto Him, and from Him; nor yet if that were as you would have it, were we to expect a new way of Government or Governours from you. And if the Giant and the *Achilles* of your Declaration, with all the allowances that can be admitted is so weake, much lesse will your purposes find a Forte in any thing else that you have said, which for our selves we have no power to examine; nor have we found truth and fidelity so constant a Companion with all things that have been averred with much confidence in these times, as to depend in this upon bare avercements; *Si falsi est accusasse, quis tandem innocens?* God himselfe should not be innocent, if to be accused were to be convicted; we hold it therefore most unjust and unreasonable for us to admit any of those aspersions which you have laid upon His Majesty into our beliefe, or to make any results at all upon them in the least degree prejudiciall to His Majestie in our opinions, untill we shall see as well what His Majestie can answer, as what you have objected against Him; for since it is a justice not to be denied to the meanest of Subjects, nay, to the greatest slaves, that they have liberty to speake for themselves, before judgment be given upon their accusation; we must tell you that we hold it a thing against all equity and right, for you to take the freedome to say what you please against His Majesty, and in the meane time to keepe Him in that restraint, that He can neither know what you have objected, nor hath liberty to make His Answer thereunto; We do therefore desire it of you in point of justice to His Majestie, and in regard of satisfaction to our selves, that this Declaration of yours may be speedily communicated to His Majestie, and that He may have free liberty (with the helpe of such Secretaries, and others that shall be needfull, to helpe His Memorie, and to do Him other requisite service therein,) to make what Answer He shall thinke fit thereunto: and that the said Answer may be as freely published and perused as this your Declaration. If you shall deny us this, we shall have so much the more reason to continue and augment our suspitions; That there was too much gall in that inke that wrote those lines which you have sent abroad, and that they are not of such solid matter as to endure the examination and tryall of a just Reply, and shall therfore endeavour to banish all other impressions thereof from us, but of hatred unto such unrighteous practises, and that which we shall now briefly set downe:

First,

First, that we beleeve it not impossible, nor a thing to be much wondred at by us, or to stick by us in any great prejudice to his Majesty: That the sad condition and manifold difficulties wherewith his Majesty hath encountred through the miscarriages of others, have found him a man: and therefore (possibly) have driven him sometimes into some refuges that were not so proper for him at other times, and in another temper of thing: as we have observed many miscarriages perhaps in others, on lesse temptations.

2. That in the mannage of such affaires which his Majesty hath been put upon: and in such a crowd of extraordinary and various exigents, it was not alwaies possible for His Majestie to do all things with His owne hand, or to examine all things by His owne eye or judgement, that have passed as His Acts: many things were necessary to be committed to the trust of others: and if perhaps any of them have failed therein, we dare not lay this to the charge of His Majestie.

3. Therfore we conceive in all equity, that his Majesty ought not to be judged of by us or his people, by the passages that have fallen out in this distemper of his Raign. As we judge not of the complexion of bodies in their distempers, but in their naturall and healthfull constitutions; and therfore we conceive all or the greatest part that hath fallen out in this busines, though it did appeare (as it doth not,) ought to have bin left out of your Declaration.

4. And then fourthly, we can remember or find so little before these times, that hath not been repaired abundantly, or satisfied by his Majesty, that we can find nothing to rest an evill thought against him justly thereupon.

5. That wee find in the recollection unto our memories, of divers passages that have of late fallen from his Majesty: That you have no such cause as you pretend to complaine of his obstruction of Peace: since we have found him willing as appeareth by his late Messages unto you: To sacrifice all his owne power and greatnesse upon the matter, (more for ought we find than ever any King yet offered) to the peace and preservation of us his people: And that the maine things that he stands upon, are the interest of his people in Religion and Liberty, and the interest of his sonne, and not his own, and we should be most unthankfull should we desert him for seeking to guard us in those things which are so precious unto us.

6. That we are upon good grounds so well perswaded of his Majesty, that we doubt not but very much of what is charged against him will fall short of evidence: and are the illues either of mis-information or mis-interpretation.

And lastly, we desire to let you know that our Allegiance is yet unmoved by this battery; so farre, that we doe yet desire of you the restitution of our King, and that he may be admitted to a personall Treaty, that we may enjoy againe the benefit of that happy Government which hath (in so prosperous and comfortable unto us. And that you will not to make good your own ends and purposes, expose us unto the hazard of another bloudy warre, left your selves be partakers of the evils thereof. Assuring you, that although we know not what God may permit you to force us unto otherwise by that power which you have, with other colours and profession, gotten into your hands; Yet in this we shall not faile by Gods helpe; In endeavouring to preserve our Allegeance to His Majestie and our fidelity to His Posterity after Him: Desiring only to be resolved of this one question by you at the latter end; Why the House of Lords was waved in a matter of so great concernment to the Kingdom?

We beseech God of his infinite mercy to restore His Majesty in His good time from that sad estate of affliction He is in, not only to the great hurt, but dishonour also of this Nation; and that he will put some sobriety into your hearts, that you may yet thinke upon those courses that may be for the preservation of this poore abused and bleeding Kingdome, from an utter and finall destruction.

FINIS.